



Department of Conservation and Recreation
Stewardship Council Meeting
April 28, 2006
Community Boating, Boston, MA

Meeting Minutes

Stewardship Councilors in Attendance: Chairman Dick Cross; Councilors Julian Agyeman, Henry Lee, Christina Crowley, and Richard Ward.

Public Attendees: Dick Miller, Lake Cochituate Advisory Council; Carole Ann Berkowitz, Protect Our Water Resources (POWR); Steve Olanoff, Friends of Blue Hills; Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon; and Susan Barrow-Williams, Community Boating, Inc.

DCR Staff in Attendance: Commissioner Stephen Burrington, Tracy Lawrence, Tricia Singer, Margie Lynch, EOEa Secretary Stephen Pritchard, Joe O'Keefe (EOEA), Nikki Belmonte, Joe Rotondo and Mike Tognarelli.

I. Call To Order (1:15 p.m.), Chairman Dick Cross

- a. There are not enough Councilors for a quorum.
- b. Correction to minutes: section IIIa should be restated so as not to insinuate that the Commonwealth is bankrupt.
- c. The Town of Natick denied the Notice of Intent to use herbicides in Lake Cochituate.
- d. A soft opening for Spectacle Island is planned for June 24.
- e. Chairman Cross and Councilor Hatch had a positive meeting with Senate President Travaglini regarding the budget. Chairman Cross stated he is waiting to have an audience in the House Ways and Means committee and referred to the handout in the Councilors' packets.
- f. Chairman Cross reconfirmed three *Strategic Goals* which are: to have an agency capable of delivering world class conservation and recreation services; to demonstrate progress towards world class parks; and to generate public appreciation and support for the resources we manage.

II. Commissioner's Report, Commissioner Stephen Burrington

a. Recognition of the Bureau of Special Services and Events

- i. Commissioner Burrington applauded the efforts of the permitting and events staff, stating that all events he has taken part in run on-time and efficiently. He thanked Chief Mike Testa and his staff for outstanding performance.

b. Storrow Drive Tunnel Update

- i. The second round of public meetings occurred this month, presenting four groups of design options and preliminary evaluations of these designs using the criteria put out for public comment.
- ii. DCR filed the Environmental Notification Form to begin the MEPA process.
- iii. A preliminary traffic study focusing on motorist origins and destinations is being completed in order to help determine traffic management options. DCR will not consider directing traffic onto the Esplanade despite the erroneous statement in a recent Globe article (April 28).

c. Stewardship Analysis

- i. DCR staff are working on the Stewardship Council's request for gap analysis addressing current resources for running a sample group of parks and what level of resources are need to do a better job.

d. Management Positions

- i. A number of key management positions including District Managers in the Urban Division have been filled. District Managers within the State Division are expected to be filled soon.
- e. **New Basin Parks Update**
 - i. Nashua Street Park and other New Charles River Basin parks are planned to be connected by several pedestrian bridges pursuant to the Central Artery/Tunnel Project requirements. Progress is being made, however there is considerable uncertainty about whether or when the commitments will be fully honored. The unfinished projects are subject to negotiations between DCR and MTA.
 - ii. \$98M budget for all of the work.
- f. **Solar Bees for Lake Cochituate**
 - i. DCR followed up with manufacturer of the Solar Bee technology (large circulators used to combat invasive aquatic plants) and two machines are expected to arrive at the end of the summer. A research team is being formed to evaluate the modules and better understand of how they control invasives.
 - ii. Benthic matting in swimming areas will be installed and some mechanical harvesting will be performed, but DCR cannot promise the level of control in the lake that was expected under the scenario where herbicides would be used.
 - iii. The Order of Conditions were received from the Natick, Wayland and Framingham conservation commissions. DCR will be working on an alternative plan for this summer and beyond.

III. Committee Updates and Meeting Schedules

- a. **Finance Committee, reported by Chairman Cross above**
- b. **Policy Committee, Julian Agyeman**
 - i. Meeting is set up with Commissioner Burrington and Tricia Singer for May 5 to discuss a gap analysis of policies, the short term focus and timetables.
 - ii. Guidelines for the Stewardship Council will also be discussed with Tricia.
- c. **Resource Management Plan Committee, Henry Lee**
 - i. The Forefathers RMP was withdrawn and may come to the Council in two months.
 - ii. The Chestnut Hill Reservoir RMP is expected to come before the Council in September. Complaints regarding the proposed removal of parking along Chestnut Hill Drive have sparked controversy.
 - iii. Waquoit Bay, Beaver Brook RMPs may be available this summer.
 - iv. Councilor Lee complimented DCR on the thoroughness of RMPs received thus far.
 - v. Stonybrook RMP is on hold due to staff illness, so guidelines for RMPs that will be based on results of this plan and the Leominster plan will be stalled.
 - vi. There is an ongoing concern about the ability to hire additional planners, however this time can be used to develop a process for collecting better data.

VI. Secretary's Update, Secretary Stephen Pritchard

- a. Secretary Pritchard gave a presentation on the Office of Public Private Partnerships (OPPP) and the DCR-MassHighway parkways and bridges partnership.
- b. OPPP funded 46 projects in FY05-06 supported by \$2.3M private funds, mainly in metro Boston area. The Esplanade River Docks, Mission Hill Playground and Teddy Ebersol Fields are some examples of this successful EOEA-DCR team effort.
- c. For FY07 1,200 partner letters were sent out (a copy will be emailed to the Council).

- d. The DCR-MassHighway partnership resulted in MassHighway pick up 40% of DCR parkways snow and ice maintenance. Future bridge work (the “Magnificent Seven” over the Charles) will amount to \$281M in capital funds over the next 5 years.
- e. By partnering with MassHighway, DCR can fully focus on the conservation, recreation and the park system. DCR would keep ownership of the parkways while MassHighway would be given curb-to-curb responsibilities. Secretary Cogliano is supportive of these ideas. Both agencies are dedicated to preservation of the historic character of the parkways and would seek appropriate funding.

Councilor Lee inquired as to whether interior park roads would be included under MassHighway care. Secretary Pritchard said this is open to discussion. Commissioner Burrington pointed out that it may not be with the MassHighway scope.

Councilor Lee asked if any friend or community groups are resistant. Secretary Pritchard noted that these groups are very concerned about the historic preservation of the parkways, but the Historic Parkway Guidelines will be very helpful in this aspect.

VII. Public Comment

- a. **Heidi Ricci**, from Mass Audubon, encouraged the Stewardship Council to endorse the Historic Parkway Guidelines once they are released. As a representative from the Wachusett Mountain Advisory Council (WMAC), Ms. Ricci stated that inadequate resources have prevented various programs and commitments at Wachusett Mountain State Reservation from happening, including the repair of the Summit Road, numerous commitments made through MEPA process for the expansion of the ski area, reclassification of the staff ecologist and completion of an updated resource management plan. She noted that legal commitments are being violated and action needs to be taken.
- b. **Carole Berkowitz**, from POWR, stated her concerns about the use of chemicals on Lake Cochituate’s South Pond (map provided) where a Superfund site already exists and in the North Pond where drinking water wells may be in danger of contamination. She also stated that strict policies should be put in place for recreation uses such as the Three Seasons Ski Club and boating to prevent the spreading of milfoil. She encouraged DCR to use weevils as biological control mechanism and submitted a copy of Wellesley’s comprehensive invasive species control report to the Council.
- c. **Dick Miller**, from Lake Cochituate Advisory Council, stated that the hold up on the implementation of the Solar Bees was due to the availability of an evaluator. Commissioner Burrington responded by advising that issues brought to the Council should not be those handled at the staff level. Chairman Cross clarified by suggesting that issues where DCR may be biased are appropriate for the Council to address. Mr. Miller also invited Commissioner Burrington to view the progress on the Cochituate Rail Trail. He also suggested that a public email forum be set up for friends group exchanges.
- d. Steve Olanoff, Friends of the Blue Hills, stated his support of the proposed MassHighway/DCR partnership.

Meeting adjourned 3:10